

POPULATION OF CHILDREN

In 2013, there were nearly 74 million children under 18 years of age in the United States, representing 23.3 percent of the population. Adults aged 18–64 years comprised 62.6 percent of the population, while 14.1 percent of Americans were aged 65 years or older. Approximately 6 million Americans were 85 and older.

The age distribution of the population has shifted significantly in the past several decades. The percentage of the population that is under 18 fell from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 23.3 percent in 2013. The representation of adolescents and young adults (aged 15–19 and 20–24 years) has also fallen, from 9.3 and 9.4 percent to 6.7 and 7.2 percent, respectively (figure 1). During this period, the percentage of the population aged 25–64 years increased from 47.3 to 52.6 percent, and the percentage aged 65 years or older increased from 11.3 to 14.1 percent. The median age in the United States has increased from 30.0 years in 1980 to 37.6 years in 2013.

The distribution of males and females within the U.S. population varies with age. In 2013, there were slightly more males than females under age 18 in the United States: 37.6 million and 36.0 million, re-

spectively. The trend is reversed among individuals aged 65 years and older, however. In 2013, there were 19.6 million males aged 65 years and older, comprising 12.6 percent of the overall male population, compared to 25.1 million females of the same age, who comprised 15.6 percent of the overall female population. This distribution has remained relatively stable over the past several decades.

The shifting racial and ethnic makeup of the child population (under age 18) reflects the increasing diversity of the population as a whole. Hispanic children represented fewer than 9 percent of children in 1980, compared to more than 24 percent in 2013 (figure 2). The percentage of children who are non-Hispanic Black has remained relatively steady over the same period, around 15 percent. However, the percentage of children who are non-Hispanic White has fallen significantly, from 74.2 percent in 1980 to 52.4 percent in 2013. After 2000, changes in the way that racial and ethnic data were collected limit comparison over time for some groups, including Asians and individuals of more than one race.

Figure 1. U.S. Population, by Age Group, 1980 and 2013

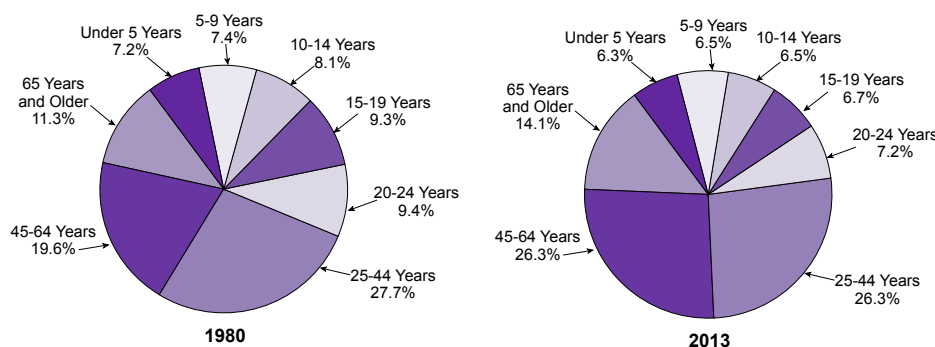
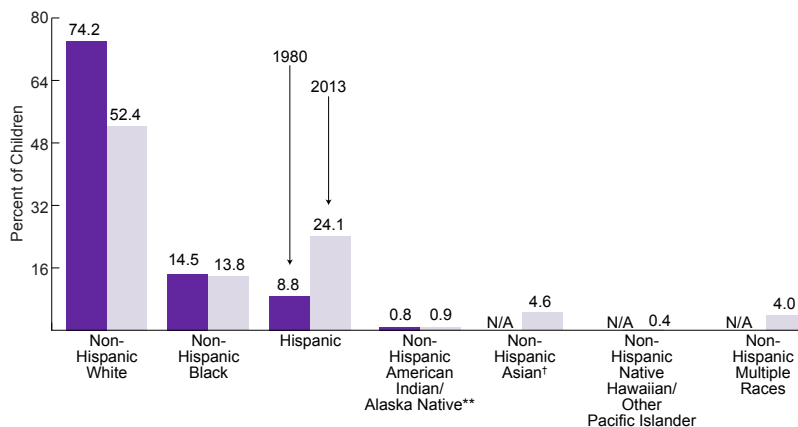


Figure 2. Population of Children Under Age 18, by Race/Ethnicity,* 1980 and 2013



*Separate estimates for all race groups not available in 1980. Estimates may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Data for 1980 include Hispanics. †Data for 1980 include Hispanics and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders.

Data Sources

Figure 1. [1980] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Estimates. Table US-EST90INT-04 : intercensal estimates of the United States resident population by age groups and sex, 1990–2000: selected months. In: *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012*. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/12statab/pop.pdf>. Accessed July 14, 2014.

[2013] U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. *Annual estimates of the resident population for selected age groups by sex for the United States, States, counties, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth and municipios: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013*. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/national/asrh/2013/index.html>. Accessed July 14, 2014.

Figure 2. [1980] U.S. Census Bureau. *Statistical abstract of the United States 1996*. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/prod/2/gen/96statab/pop.pdf>. Accessed July 14, 2014. Analyses conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

[2013] U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. *Annual estimates of the resident population by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin for the United States and States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013*. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/national/asrh/2013/index.html>. Accessed July 14, 2014. Analyses conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

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